

Annual Report 2019



You might ask why this cover photo? I thought about it before choosing it since no dogs, veterans or children are shown. But, it reflects spring in the Rockies, the snow has receded and life is renewed. And, after all, that's what K9 Care Montana is really all about...helping renew lives.

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This is the annual report for calendar year 2019. Its purpose is to update our board and supporters regarding our accomplishments in 2019 and outline the focus of efforts in 2020.

Remembrance: The numbers for 2019 are yet to be tallied, but in 2018 more than 5000 veterans and active duty soldiers died at their own hands. Not all, but some of those who killed themselves did so in part because the nation they served so nobly failed them. We remember them, mourn their loss and will continue to do our small part to stem this epidemic.

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9

Recognition: I want to recognize the men, women, small business and Montana corporations that volunteer their time, energy and resources to make it possible to do what we do day in and day out. I want to recognize, as well, the professional dog trainers who have teamed with K9CMT to produce some of the best service dogs in the country. There are too many to list here by name, but know we love and appreciate you all.

Core purpose: In 2019, we were presented with several opportunities to work a bit outside our usual box. Those opportunities came about, in part, as a consequence of a growing Montana awareness of who we are and what we do.

- We were players in the broader effort to get a bill to our governor’s desk which made it illegal to put a service dog vest on a pet in order to gain public access. Governor Bullock signed HB 439 establishing that law.
- We were also asked to provide technical advice in the construction of an Airport Service Dog Relief Area at Bozeman’s Yellowstone Internal Airport. We were happy to help.
- Importantly, under our aegis as *a not for profit* organization we helped garner the resources and labor necessary to retrofit the home of one our recipients who health has declined over the past few years.

We’re proud of this work, but it’s something of a tangent to our core mission. I want to assure all who might be concerned, in 2020 we will focus intently on what we do best...training and delivering top notch service dogs.

Relocation complete: If you have ever built or remodeled anything in Montana, you know it can be a challenge. Still with limited resources and broad volunteer support we are essentially set and K9CMT is up and running at my home in Livingston. Throughout the summer we concentrated on our new kennels. They’re heated and hot water is available; drinking and feeding utensils are upgraded; security fences for the kennels and exercise area are in place just to name but a few of our completed tasks.

The circle keeps getting bigger: We are happy to tell you that we are currently working with 76 recipient families. A few are still at the “foster puppy” stage but most are either fully trained service dogs or formal service dogs in training. I should note that this number represents K9CMT provided dogs. We are also working with a number of veterans who have their own dogs that we help train to standard.

Fund raising: It is always a challenge and this past year somewhat more so. As a consequence of the effort and time required to reestablish the K9CMT facilities we had to forego two of our traditional fund raising events. When you look at the *attached Profit and Loss Statement for 2019* you’ll note that our revenue is down about \$25,000. We fully expect to return to our usual levels of support in 2020. Of note in 2019, one of our long term donor foundations chose to gift us with “securities”. We are grateful and have opened an investment account with a trusted broker in the hopes that the dollar value represented by this stock will grow and be available to us as a “rainy day fund”.

Looking Ahead: 2020 ought to be a good year.

- The heavy lifting part of our move is done. The awareness of who we are and what we do is increasing in The Gallatin valley and surrounding areas; indeed across the state.
- Our new training model incorporating a few carefully selected dog trainers to handle basic obedience really improved our productivity.
- Bridger Animal Nutrition in Bozeman and Nulo Dog Foods are helping us contain our dog food expenses. Other small businesses in the area are also helping with various tasks. We feel good about where we are and our ability to sustain and even continue to expand outreach in the year ahead.
- We expect to introduce another four to six dogs into our mix.

Finally: I had to look the word up when a friend suggested I was being “nuanced”. He was smiling when he said it, but it’s true. I speak of Post Traumatic Stress...I don’t include the term “Disorder”. Our recipients are burdened by stresses attendant to their service and we want to help them with that. In a similar vein, we’ve used the descriptor “wounded warrior” since our inception. Some infer a relationship with the widely known “WWP”. None exists and hereafter we’ll begin referring to our recipients as “America’s Veterans”, for that is indeed who they are.

May 2020 be a joyful and blessed year for you and your families and may God Bless America.

David W. Riggs
Founder and CEO

Enclosure: 2019 P&L